DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 371 903 PS 022 539

AUTHOR Dall, Frank
TITLE Education and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Challenge of Implementation. Innocenti Occasional Papers, Child Rights Series, Number 4.
INSTITUTION United Nations Children's Fund, Florence (Italy). International Child Development Centre.
REPORT NO ISSN-1014-7837
PUB DATE Nov 93
NOTE 57p.; This paper is part of the background documentation for a forthcoming study on the resource implications of implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 4).
AVAILABLE FROM UNICEF International Child Development Centre, Piazza Santissima Annunziata, 12, 50122, Florence, Italy.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Bias; Childrens Rights; Developing Nations; *Educational Change; *Educational Discrimination; Educational Innovation; Educational Strategies; *Equal Education; Foreign Countries; Government Role; *Literacy; Literacy Education; Primary Education; Program Costs; Program Descriptions; *Program Development; Sex Differences; *World Problems
IDENTIFIERS Africa; Declaration of the Rights of the Child; *United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child

ABSTRACT

This paper examines ways to educate the 160 million children denied access to primary schools and the 960 million adults throughout the world still illiterate in 1990. It focuses on three especially marginalized groups: (1) girls and women, who make up the majority of unschooled and illiterate children and adults; (2) the children of ethnic minorities, whose linguistic and cultural needs are often neglected by national school systems; and (3) the children of nomadic groups, especially in Africa, who have special educational needs due to their non-sedentary way of life. A two-pronged strategy for achieving "Schooling for All" in Africa and other regions by the year 2000 is proposed, which: (1) includes plans for a comprehensive evaluation of educational needs and a revitalization of existing primary schools, and (2) calls for cost-sharing among governments, the communities, the private sector, and international donors. The paper emphasizes the need for innovation in educational strategies, suggesting several replacements for the classroom-based approach designed to service pre-industrial European society. It concludes by looking ahead to the future educational needs of the world's children. (MDM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 371 903

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

unicef

INTERNATIONAL CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

EDUCATION AND THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD: THE CHALLENGE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Frank Dall*

CRS 4

Innocenti Occasional Papers

PS 022539

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
J.R. Himes
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Spedale degli Innocenti
Florence, Italy

INNOCENTI OCCASIONAL PAPERS
CHILD RIGHTS SERIES, NUMBER 4

EDUCATION AND THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD: THE CHALLENGE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Frank Dall*

CRS 4

November 1993

This paper is part of the background documentation for a forthcoming study on the resource implications of implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 4).

* Senior Advisor, Education Section, Programme Division, UNICEF, New York.

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the policies or views of UNICEF.

The author wishes to thank Jim Himes and the task force of colleagues he brought together for purposes of putting together a book on child rights for their useful comments and encouragement during the various stages in the drafting of this paper. A special note of thanks should also go to the many colleagues, professional partners and friends at UNICEF headquarters and in the many regional and country field offices visited during the past three years. Their shared experience and actions have helped to enrich this offering. The author is also grateful to Diana Saltarelli for the final editorial assistance.

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY v

I. INTRODUCTION 1

II. THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD: AN ADDED DIMENSION 2
What Has 'Jomtien' Contributed to Education as a Child Right? 5
A Framework for Action 7
Basic Education: A Right and a Necessity 10

III. REACHING THE UNREACHED 14
Educating Girls and Women 16
Educating the Children of Minority Communities and Indigenous Populations 21
Educating the Children of Nomadic Groups 24
Meeting the Cost of Educational Rights 28
Achieving Schooling for All in Africa and Other Regions by 2000 30
Finding the Resources for Africa 33

IV. A LOOK AHEAD 37
What Should the Characteristics of the 'New Model' Be? 41
For nations seeking to become better integrated into the 'information age' 41
For nations recently coming to grips with their own industrial revolutions 42
For nations entering their agricultural revolution 42

V. CONCLUSION 43

ENDNOTES 46

TABLES

1. Average Social Returns to Education 11
2. Gypsy Primary Enrolment Rates 23
3. Total Population and Nomad Population 25
4. Framework for the Reform of Africa's Primary Education Systems 32
5. Second-Chance Learning Centres: Estimated Four-Year Budget for Each Country 35
6. Second-Chance Learning Centres: Proposed Sources of Financing 35
7. Improving the Quality of African Primary Education: Estimated Four-Year Budget for Each Country 36
8. Improving the Quality of African Primary Education: Proposed Sources of Financing 36
9. Projected Costs of Schooling For All and Non-formal Alternatives for Africa .. 37

FIGURES

1. Female Education and Child Survival 12
2. Female Education and Fertility 13
3. Adult Literacy and Female Literacy 30 Per Cent or Lower 17
4. Primary School Female Enrolment as a Percentage of Male Enrolment 18

BOXES

1. Education and Economic Growth 11
2. BRAC Schools in Bangladesh 20
3. *Escuelas Mayas* in Guatemala 22
4. *Tostan*: A Basic Learning Project in Senegal 27
5. Second-Chance Learning Centres for Primary School Drop-outs in Rural Areas in Africa 34-35
6. Improving the Quality of African Primary Education 36

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The education provisions of the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) were inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959) and other international instruments asserting the importance of education as a social and cultural right. The CRC added to these strongly **legalistic** recommendations **a moral and ethical dimension**: the affirmation of the child's right to a non-discriminatory education that fully respected his or her cultural identity and language needs.

The 1990 World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien (Thailand), gave an **active dimension** to the concept of education as a child right. In a final declaration, it called for a "supportive policy context", the mobilization of financial resources and a strengthening of international solidarity, underscoring the importance of education as a right (for individual growth) and as a necessity (for national economic development). The Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs also emerging from 'Jomtien' sets a number of goals at country, regional and global levels for meeting "the basic learning needs of all by the year 2000".

This paper examines how to "reach the unreached": the 160 million children (70 per cent of whom were girls) denied access to primary school; and the 960 million adults (700 of whom were women) still illiterate in 1990. Girls and women are, in fact, one of the three especially marginalized groups discussed in the paper; a second group considered are the children of ethnic minorities (for example, the Gypsies) whose linguistic and cultural needs are consistently neglected by national school systems; and a third particularly disadvantaged category examined are the children of nomadic groups, especially in Africa, who have special educational needs because of their non-sedentary way of life.

Educational rights have a cost. It has been estimated that most low- and middle-income countries could fulfill every child's right to a basic education by applying education and fiscal policy reforms, especially a conscious shifting of national expenditures from military and other non-essential investments to education and other social services. In some sub-Saharan countries, outside donor aid will also be required.

A two-pronged strategy for achieving "Schooling for All" in Africa and other regions by 2000 is proposed: first, a comprehensive evaluation of educational needs must be undertaken; and second, existing primary schools must be revitalized. A framework for the reform of Africa's primary education system is suggested, together with a schedule of cost-sharing among governments, the community and private sector, and international donors.

The paper emphasizes the need to think differently about how to tackle the problem of basic education, suggesting several replacements for the classroom-centred model designed to service a pre-industrial European society: the BRAC schools in Bangladesh, 70 per cent of whose students are girls; the community-run *Escuelas Mayas* in Guatemala catering for the special cultural and linguistic needs of Mayan children; *Tostan*, a basic learning project in Senegal; and 'tent' schools for nomad groups. Costs for implementing educational reforms in Africa are also discussed and two examples given: Second-Chance Learning Centres for primary school drop-outs in rural areas; and a project for improving the quality of African primary education.

The paper concludes by looking ahead to the future educational needs of the world's children. The dilemma is not just guaranteeing that every child be given basic literacy and other skills, regardless of gender, ethnic origin, socio-economic background and way of life, but also ensuring that he or she has access to relevant technical knowledge to meet the challenge of today's information and technological revolution. Unless a number of radical reforms are made to give basic as well as technologically relevant education to children in the developing world, the North-South chasm will be irreversible. Furthermore, unless countries mobilize the ideas and resources needed to make the educational provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child a reality, the global process of democratization now underway will be unsustainable, with consequences that implicate us all.

I. INTRODUCTION

It is sobering to note that more than three decades after the United Nations adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which stipulated that children are "entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages...", over 200 million school-age children, for a variety of preventable reasons, still have no access to any kind of basic education service. Moreover, 45 years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserted that "everyone has a right to education", 960 million adults, two thirds of whom are women, are still illiterate, and more than one third of the world's adults have neither access to printed knowledge nor technical skills to help them adapt to their society's rapidly changing social and economic conditions. In addition, more than 100 million children and countless adults fail to complete the basic education programmes they start; millions more enter schools, but do not learn enough to meet their basic learning needs. Growing numbers of schooled illiterates, a problem recently recognized both in Europe and the United States, are also found in many developing countries where primary schools have ceased to function effectively over the last decade because of the rapid decline in the quality of schooling, economic hardships and political neglect.

Historically, education as a human right was one of the last human needs to receive the attention it deserves. Two reasons may account for this. First, among the list of basic human needs, health, shelter and food have always received first call on limited resources because they were assumed to be priorities for survival. Second, economists and development specialists have only recently begun to understand the positive contribution education makes to national development. The beneficial effects that education has on productivity, health, nutrition, fertility rates and child welfare in general are well supported by recent research findings. Here, perhaps, the World Bank, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and some bilateral agencies deserve credit for helping to place education on the list of international priorities.

It was not until after the Second World War that the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (1948) recognized education as a fundamental human right. Subsequently, the **Declaration of the Rights of the Child**, adopted by the United Nations under Resolution 1386/XIV of November 1959, established that free and compulsory basic education should be an essential building block for the promotion of a child's "general culture and enable him [and her]...to become a useful member of society". In a similar vein, the **International**

Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) underscored that education should be "directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, ... shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms ... [and] enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society" (Article 13.1). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) **Convention Against Discrimination in Education** (1960) supported the need to make education a developmental priority and a basic human right. Other aspects of education were spelt out in subsequent UNESCO instruments, including the **Recommendation Concerning the Status of Teachers** (1966) which recognized that "advance in education depends largely on the qualifications and ability of the teaching staff" and that "teaching is to be regarded as a profession"; the **Recommendation Concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education Relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms** (1974), which stated that education should enhance international understanding and instill a sense of civic duty; the **Revised Recommendation Concerning Technical Vocational Education** (1974), which recognized education as a lifelong process; and the **Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education** (1976), which urged that appropriate structures be set up to meet the educational needs of adults, with a special focus on women.

Unfortunately, the strong formalistic and legal emphasis of many of these provisions obscured the moral and ethical elements of the question. In fact, these recommendations largely failed to generate the response needed to meet the growing demand-supply crisis in basic education. This crisis was the outcome, on the one hand, of exploding population growth rates and, on the other, of persistent economic decline, especially among the least-developed nations of South Asia and Africa. As a result, the dream in these and other developing countries of providing every child of school age with a good and affordable education, in tune with her or his daily needs, seems to have become unattainable.

II. THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD: AN ADDED DIMENSION

Drafters of the 1989 United Nations **Convention on the Rights of the Child** (CRC) drew heavily on the relevant provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and the UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education

(1960). Many elements contained in the UNESCO Convention are reiterated in Article 28 of the CRC,[1] which states that:

> 28.1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:
>
> (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;
> (b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;
> (c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;
> (d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;
> (e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.
>
> 28.2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.
>
> 28.3. States Parties shall promote and encourage international co-operation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

Article 28 contains provisions frequently found in international instruments promoting the right to education, including the right to compulsory and free primary education and access "to all" to secondary, vocational and higher education. However, the provisions of this article inevitably involve some ambiguities regarding the specific obligations that signatories have in terms of implementing these principles. For instance, the obligation to ensure non-discriminatory policies in relation to the enjoyment of education rights has an immediate effect notwithstanding the non-availability of financial resources. The only exception in this regard, in some legal systems, relates to what may be termed 'affirmative action programmes'.[2] But these programmes should also satisfy various criteria designed to ensure that their real purpose is to achieve equality rather than to perpetuate inequality.[3] Although

the principle of non-discrimination contained in Article 2 of the CRC[4] is applicable in terms of education, the drafters apparently believed that discrimination in schools was a sufficiently serious problem to merit stressing the principle also in the context of Article 28, including the reference to "equal opportunity".

The immediate effect of Article 2, not subject to the availability of resources, is of considerable potential importance in the field of basic education. Whatever resources are available must be allocated to ensure the enjoyment of the right to non-discriminatory education. This principle deserves emphasis, especially in countries where the shortage of resources may be used by governments as a justification for not enforcing the educational provisions of the CRC, especially relating to primary education. Moreover, the importance of this principle is shown by the fact that women and girls represent two thirds of those who currently lack access to both education and literacy. An overview of female education would show that women and girls generally have limited opportunities, face numerous obstacles, and receive an education that is of questionable quality and relevance.

Article 28.2 of the CRC establishes — for the first time in an international instrument promoting the right to education — that school discipline should be administered "in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity". This innovation has ramifications that clearly go beyond the provisions of earlier instruments prohibiting cruel and degrading treatment of children in schools. Article 28.3, which calls for international cooperation in matters relating to education, is also innovative. Overall, however, Article 28 seems largely to reflect the spirit of the pre-existing human rights provisions that inspired the CRC.

Article 29 of the CRC[5] contains more detailed provisions in support of the kind of education that should be made available to ethnic and other minority groups. The need to provide an education that values and develops respect for the "child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values" is considered an important aspect of any educational service. Article 29 also commits signatories to assist in the full development of each child's "personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities". Preparing children to live in a free society "in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance ... " is another important element in a world of religious, cultural and ethnic diversity. The provisions of Article 29, therefore, complement and extend the principles contained in Article 28. They also reinforce the notion that even the smallest group has a right to an education that fully respects its cultural identity and specific language needs. This is an essential added emphasis when considering

the special educational needs of the numerous, and often ignored or forgotten, children of minority groups who currently lack a basic education.

What Has 'Jomtien' Contributed to Education as a Child Right?

The World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien (Thailand) in March 1990, gathered most of the major actors around the same table at least to begin to ask some of the important questions. For the first time in history, over 155 governments attended a meeting whose sole purpose was to discuss the world's current educational crisis, with a special focus on basic education. Again for the first time, all the multilateral agencies, donors and a large group of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) came together to discuss key issues affecting the education of the world's children. They attended the meeting with significant motivation and political will, and the resulting joint agreement addresses the main educational issues discussed. Participants even prescribed joint actions that should be taken to satisfy clearly identified basic education needs.

The success of this initiative can be attributed, in part, to months of careful preparation to ensure that the final agreement reflected the broadest local and regional discussion possible. Teachers, parents, pupils and educators of all sorts were asked how the issue of basic education as a child right could be meaningfully addressed within their own sociocultural contexts. Preparatory forums were convened to facilitate an exchange of the findings, experience and observations of educators and parents in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe and North America. A forthcoming UNESCO publication, analysing and summarizing the discussions of more than 23 panels, points to the richness, diversity and creativity of the discussions that this historical event was able to elicit.

Delegates and organizers felt that, after 30 years of failure to meet the basic education needs of the world's populations, it was time to give the many noble declarations of intent the 'teeth' they were missing. The Jomtien **Declaration on Education For All** is concise and to the point. Its 10 articles clearly reiterate the right to "education for all"; moreover, they underscore the importance of education not only as a child right or human right (for individual growth) but also as a necessity (for national economic development). In this respect, special emphasis is given to the education of girls and women, since they constitute a largely untapped human resource for the development of nations.

The following extracts from the Jomtien Declaration illustrate this new emphasis.[6]

Article 1.1 stresses the right of all individuals to a basic education:

> Every person — child, youth and adult — shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet [his or her] basic learning needs. These needs comprise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, numeracy, and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, values, and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their intellectual capacities, to live and work in dignity, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning. The scope of basic learning needs and how they should be met varies with individual countries and cultures, and inevitably, changes with the passage of time.

Article 1.3 asserts that basic education is a developmental necessity:

> Basic education is more than an end in itself. It is the foundation for lifelong learning and human development on which countries may build, systematically, further levels and types of education and training.

Article 3.3 emphasizes that the education of girls and women constitutes a priority:

> In countries where female enrolment and literacy rates are much lower than those for males, the most urgent priority is to improve access to, and the quality of, education for girls and women, and to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation. All gender stereotyping in education should be eliminated.

Five key elements of the expanded vision are presented in Article 2 of the Jomtien Declaration (and subsequently elaborated in Articles 3 to 7). These highlight the need to bring about with creativity and determination the following improvements in basic education:

- universalizing access and promoting equity;
- focusing on learning acquisition, as opposed to just teaching;
- broadening the means and scope of basic education. Here, the challenge is to develop a more appropriate content and new delivery systems;
- enhancing the environment for learning; and
- strengthening partnerships, which includes extending partnerships to those previously excluded from the teaching-learning process; that is, parents and other members of the community.

For the first time, the right to basic education is given an active dimension — the missing element in so many of the earlier attempts to define in legal terms what constitutes an educational right. This dimension is described in Article 8 as a "supportive policy context" for the implementation of the principles of the Jomtien Declaration. Article 9, in turn, makes a passable effort to specify some of the necessary steps to "mobilise financial resources" for this purpose. Article 10 cautions that all of the above cannot be done without "strengthening international solidarity" among donors and nations alike. Both groups need to understand how war, civil strife, peace, and the optimal conditions needed to support educational development are interrelated. The Article advises in a categorical, if rather utopian, tone that:

> All nations must work together to resolve conflicts and strife, to end military occupations, and to settle displaced populations. Only a stable and peaceful environment can create the conditions in which human beings, child and adult alike, may benefit from the goals of this declaration.

A Framework for Action

The **Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs**, which also emerged from the Jomtien initiative, is a significant and innovative tool for turning education from a utopian dream into a reality. Based on the best collective knowledge and experience of all participants, the Framework for Action was developed as a reference and guide for those prepared to make a commitment to implement the goal of "education for all" by formulating coherent plans for action. The Framework provides guidelines for three levels of action: (a) direct action within individual countries; (b) cooperation among groups of countries sharing certain characteristics and concerns; and (c) multilateral and bilateral cooperation in the world community.

Individual countries and groups of countries, as well as international, regional and national organizations, may use the Framework for Action to develop their own specific plans of action and programmes in line with their particular objectives, mandates and constituencies. By July 1993, 86 countries had completed national programmes of action, many including well-designed educational components that reflect all or most of the main goals set out in the Jomtien Declaration. The World Bank, a principal donor and actor at Jomtien, has already committed more than US$2 billion to education since March 1990. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and other bilateral agencies,

including those of the Governments of Denmark, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Italy, have collectively committed a significant proportion of their annual aid budgets to basic education, and have promised to increase this amount over the next five to seven years.

Multilateral agencies have also begun to commit resources. UNICEF, for example, has hired a team of educators to help implement the education goals by the end of the decade: five senior advisers are working at UNICEF headquarters; four more persons have been contracted to work on the implementation of plans of action in four of the six UNICEF regions; and about 50 education programme officers have been hired to work on educational issues at the country-office level. Unfortunately, most multilateral agencies still have some way to go before they reach the funding levels promised for the first half of this decade. UNICEF itself has allocated less than 10 per cent, versus a promised 17 per cent, of its total resources to the implementation of the four education goals formulated at the World Summit for Children (see below).

Overall, the Jomtien Declaration calls for precise actions through a well-stated framework of goals. To make it easier for implementers to set their own specific targets in line with their national situation and budget, participants divided the ultimate goal — meeting "the basic learning needs of all by the year 2000" — into a set of realistic intermediate goals. These subsequently formed the basis for the education section of the Goals for Children in the 1990s, adopted six months later at the World Summit for Children,[7] which recommended:

> (i) Expansion of early childhood development activities, including appropriate low-cost family and community-based interventions;
>
> (ii) Universal access to basic education, and achievement of primary education by at least 80 per cent of primary school-age children through formal schooling or non-formal education of comparable learning standard, with emphasis on reducing the current disparities between boys and girls;
>
> (iii) Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate (the appropriate age group to be determined in each country) to at least half its 1990 level, with emphasis on female literacy;
>
> (iv) Increased acquisition by individuals and families of the knowledge, skills and values required for better living, made available through all educational channels, including the mass media, other forms of modern and traditional communication and social action, with effectiveness measured in terms of behavioural change.

By setting time-bound targets for the achievement of "education for all" goals, the Jomtien Declaration conveys a sense of urgency to meeting the educational needs of children. As societal conditions change, plans and objectives can be reviewed and updated to meet the needs of specific target groups of children. Such observable and adjustable targets provide invaluable assistance in monitoring and evaluating the progress towards reaching the goals. The Jomtien Declaration has been formulated in such a way that its effective implementation is an explicit and primary concern. Thus, countries with limited resources and low literacy and school attendance rates may now be in a better position to make hard choices and establish achievable national targets within more realistic time-frames.

The Framework for Action highlights several principles of action for the effective implementation of the goals. International donors should give priority to those countries currently least able to meet their population's basic learning needs. At the national level, actions for implementing each child's right to a basic education should include:

- identifying whether the basic education services required are formal or non-formal. This should be done systematically, through a comprehensive education analysis or sector assessment and with the active participation of concerned groups and communities;
- adopting strategies that involve different sectors and interested groups, including private and public institutions. Basic education needs to become everyone's concern;
- evaluating the capacity of existing institutions to manage and deliver educational services before creating new institutions. What already exists may only need some adjustment or revitalization for it to provide the intended result; and
- forming new partnerships whose primary aim should be to foster a spirit of cooperation between multilateral and bilateral entities so as to help build endogenous capacities.

Since progress towards implementing the education provisions of the Jomtien Declaration will depend on national circumstances, the Framework for Action suggests that:

- a receptive policy environment be developed through advocacy and the effective mobilization of support at both the community and the national level;
- policies for the improvement of basic education be carefully selected and the research needed to do this undertaken in a timely manner, preferably with the collaboration of a national institution;

- national capacities be strengthened to carry out the managerial, analytical and technical tasks needed to support the necessary educational changes;
- supportive information channels be mobilized to meet the basic learning needs of every segment of the community. For example, 'third channel'[8] options should be used to target out-of-school groups, including housebound girls and adult groups with special needs; and
- a workable plan of action be designed, which will require bringing potential partners together early in the analysis, design and planning process. The formation of a national committee for the implementation of basic education goals is proving to be an effective way of doing this in partnership with national governments, especially in Africa where the need for change is most acute.

Basic Education: A Right and a Necessity

Investing in basic education always has significant cultural and economic implications for both individual and national development. However, this is particularly true where existing educational disparities still closely reflect the socio-economic gap between the wealthy and the poor, as is the case in many parts of Asia and Africa and in such countries in Central and Latin America as Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Belize, Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador. In many of the least-developed countries, a sizeable proportion of each country's wealth lies in the untapped capacity of its people. Historically, nations that have demonstrated the capacity to sustain social and economic development have also emphasized education and training to increase their people's capacity to accumulate knowledge, communicate information, and coordinate and organize themselves productively.

Accumulated experience in Africa and elsewhere in the developing world provides convincing evidence that increased investment in education, particularly basic education, can yield significant benefits — including higher incomes, lower fertility rates, and improved health — all of which are of critical importance in the struggle for self-sufficiency and sustainable development.[9]

Education is both a right and a necessity. Evidence suggests that a child who has access to good primary education has a better chance in life.[10] Basic reading, writing and conceptual skills provide important building blocks for a life of continued learning and problem-solving. Basic education enables the individual to learn important life skills relating

Box 1

EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Many studies on farm productivity, family enterprises, and wage earners have demonstrated the effects of education on output and productivity. As Table 1 shows, the returns to education are substantial. Although the impact of education on aggregate real output has been less well documented, a recent study on the determinants of real gross domestic product (GDP) covering 58 countries during 1960-1985 strongly suggests that education can contribute significantly to aggregate output. An increase of one year in average years of education may lead to a 3 per cent rise in GDP.

Table 1: AVERAGE SOCIAL RETURNS TO EDUCATION
(In Percentages, 1960-1985)

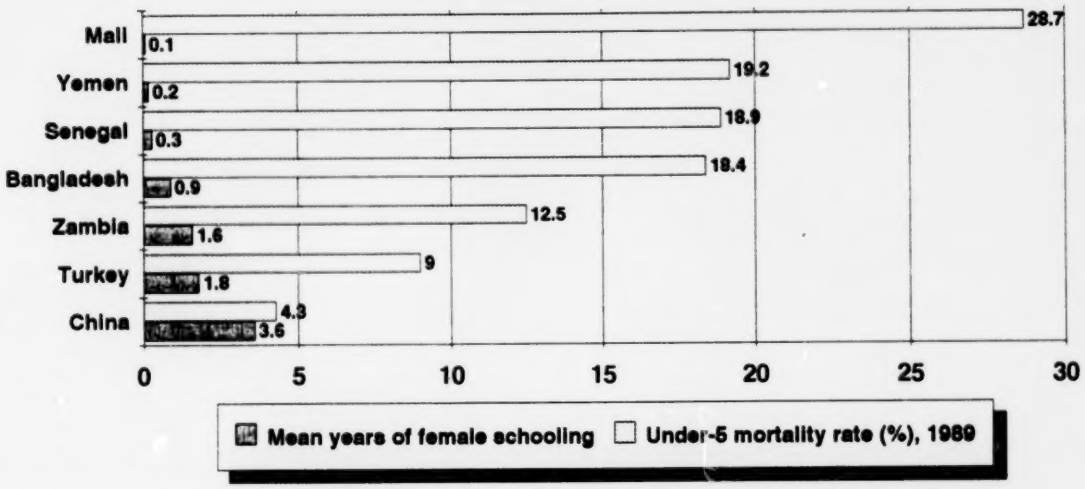
	Primary Education	Secondary Education	Higher Education
Sub-Saharan Africa	26	17	13
Asia	27	15	13
Latin America and the Caribbean	26	18	16

The results of this research differ from region to region. For most groups of developing countries, the effect of education on GDP is clearly positive, and (within the range examined) the higher the initial level of education, the greater the benefits from increasing it. This underscores the importance of investing in education. Sub-Saharan Africa is an exception: increasing average years of education by one year, from 3.25 in 1985 to 4.25, is expected to have a negligible effect on output. This reflects factors such as unfavourable local conditions, lack of complementary inputs, inadequate institutional capacities, and other economic obstacles that prevent people from benefiting fully from their greater skills. The results suggest that there may be thresholds in the returns to education. For example, about four years of education seem to be needed to attain functional literacy. Investments may yield substantial returns only when they are large enough to push the economy over such a threshold.

Source: World Bank, *World Development Report on Poverty*, World Bank, Washington, D.C., 1990

to health, family-life and the environment, as well as how to work with others in harmony and how to cope with the complex challenges of a pluralistic, multicultural society. Education and economic performance are closely linked (Box 1). Improvements in education, especially at the basic or primary levels, bring broad social benefits.[11] A World Bank study found that the social returns to investments in primary education are about 27 per cent higher than the returns in most other areas of social investment. In the area of agricultural productivity,

Figure 1: FEMALE EDUCATION AND CHILD SURVIVAL
(Selected Countries, 1989)

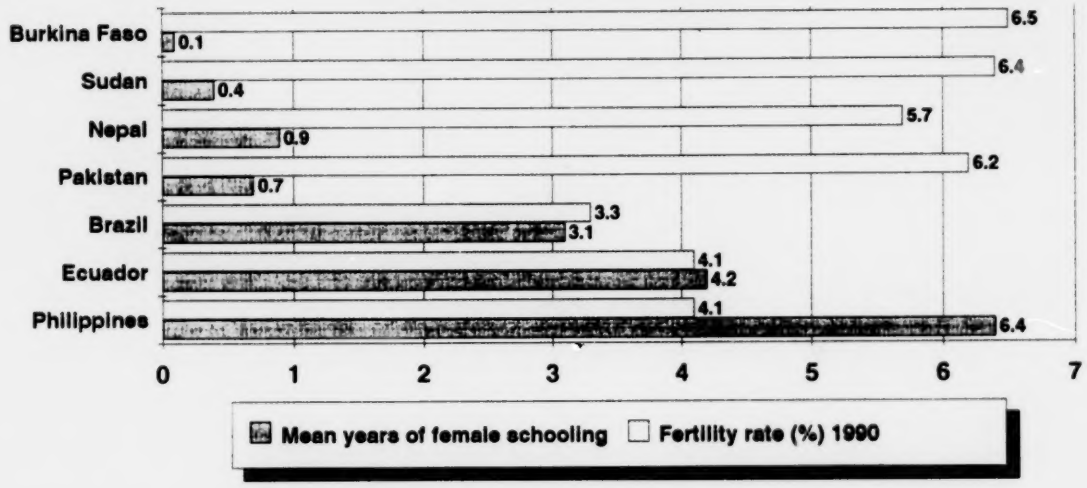


Sources: UNICEF, *State of the World's Children 1991*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1991; and UNDP, *Human Development Report 1991*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1991.

where subsistence farming is a key income sector supporting over 70 per cent of the world's population, studies show that farmers with only four years of education have an 8.75 per cent higher productivity rate than farmers with no education at all. Other studies show a close correlation between the kind of technologies adopted by farmers and the educational skills needed to sustain increased productivity.[12] Similarly, the connection between the level of a mother's education and child survival is supported by a number of current studies (Figure 1). A clear relationship also exists between the level of female education and the fertility rate (Figure 2). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) *Human Development Report 1991* notes that as the level of illiteracy declines, so does the average national population growth rate.

The current worldwide resurgence of religious and racial intolerance, which is challenging and undermining the trend towards democratization in Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America, has prompted educators and legislators to conclude that some knowledge of basic rights, democratic principles, tolerance and understanding of diversity are necessary if countries undergoing profound social and political transformations are to survive.[13] They argue that the formal curriculum beginning at the primary level needs to be changed to

Figure 2: FEMALE EDUCATION AND FERTILITY
(Selected Countries, 1990)



Sources: Ibid.

reflect and encourage an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of individuals within a democratic society, with an emphasis on the concepts of democracy, justice, equality, freedom, solidarity, peace and dignity. Furthermore, the following skills will need to be incorporated into a relevant basic education if the move towards participatory democracy is to be sustained:

- **oral and written language skills**, to be able to listen and discuss. In Africa, the right to acquire these skills in one's mother tongue needs to be stressed;
- **judgement skills**, acquired by collecting and analysing materials from different sources, to be able to detect prejudice and bias and arrive at balanced conclusions.
- **social skills**, to learn to accept differences and form non-threatening relationships; and
- **action skills**, relating, for example, to problem solving and conflict resolution, to develop leadership capabilities and harmonious group interaction.

Unfortunately, the right to a basic education — long considered a moral right and today also supported as an economic necessity — is denied to millions of children for

structural and political reasons, especially in Africa and South Asia. Severe regional differences in economic and social opportunity continue to play a part in stunting child development within the first few critical years of life. Poverty is the most formidable enemy of healthy child development: it determines the quality of the environmental conditions in which many children are forced to grow up; and these conditions, in turn, influence the children's physical, intellectual and emotional growth.[14]

A recent Harvard University study[15] concluded that poverty may, in fact, be the single most significant factor determining children's physical and emotional development. Children who were from impoverished single-parent families and who had often been left, especially during their first three years of life, unsupervised or in the care of disinterested neighbours or relatives were found to display slower psychosocial growth than children who had been looked after by an attentive parent. The study also found that stressed and depressed mothers had a negative influence on the emotional growth of their children. What is not known, however, is whether the emotional stunting resulting from unfavourable socio-environmental conditions is reversible. In other words, ensuring the right to an education to children who have suffered the combined physical and emotional blights of poverty is not in itself a sufficient guarantee that, once attained, this right will, in fact, benefit the recipient.

It is not enough to verbalize the legal and social provisions of the CRC without tackling the macro issues; namely, the underlying causes of the poverty and economic injustice that so many of the world's children still suffer. Insisting on buying a cart after the horse has bolted will not restore the owner's right to have a functioning cart. A number of educators and economists have drawn attention to the need to deal with the underlying causes of social injustice[16] before addressing issues relating to improvements in education. Education is not a social cure-all, nor can it by its sole power remedy the underlying structural causes of social injustice. At best, education can highlight the social distortions that economic disparities and social deprivation generate. But this is only possible if those running the system make a conscious effort to monitor social outcomes through the school.

III. REACHING THE UNREACHED

More than ever before, development specialists and educators worldwide are realizing that the success of education systems should be measured not only by what they teach but also

by whom they reach. Basic education is commonly accessed through primary schooling. Currently, for economic, geographic, ethnic and other reasons, a large proportion of school-age children fail to enter primary school. And if they do, many are unable to stay in school long enough to benefit from the exposure to learning. Despite the apparent progress made in education throughout the world during the 1970s and 1980s, an estimated 960 million adults were still illiterate in 1990, and about 160 million children were unable to gain access to primary education. Providing every child with the right to five years of basic education, at a minimum, is a task that will require careful planning based on an accurate assessment of the problem. Similarly recognizing where the problem is, and then designing flexible, non-traditional ways of dealing with it, will be an imperative for governments as well as educators. It will take a special kind of determination and a sort of creativity not often displayed by Ministries of Education to reach the small groups of traditionally marginalized children and adults wishing to receive basic education services.

The accurate assessment and identification of those most at risk will be an essential first step in dealing with the problem of providing basic education services to the unreached. In some countries of Africa and South Asia, economic decline or structural adjustment pressures even make it difficult to sustain public services at their present low levels of efficiency. Basic education, unfortunately still not a high priority for many governments, is frequently the first area to suffer. For this reason, few governments maintain up-to-date data enabling them to monitor and evaluate public services by identifying and tracking individuals or groups who have been denied their basic right to education. A significant proportion of children among the growing numbers of urban poor and in isolated rural communities — especially those from marginalized indigenous groups, ethnic minorities or nomadic groups — continue to be victims of the neglect resulting from political and bureaucratic blindness. This blindness is generated by inadequate information and a lack of understanding of the special educational needs of children from different groups within each national context.

The following sections contain a discussion of children frequently belonging to disenfranchised groups that are unattached to mainstream national politics and culture. All the groups selected represent different but complementary facets of the dilemma surrounding the right to basic education. Girl children are the single largest and most educationally deprived group across every national, political and cultural border. Ethnic and indigenous minorities, such as the American Indians, the European Gypsies and the tribal groups of

Africa and Asia, have all been deprived of their full right to a relevant basic education. Nomadic groups are frequently misunderstood and neglected.

Educating Girls and Women

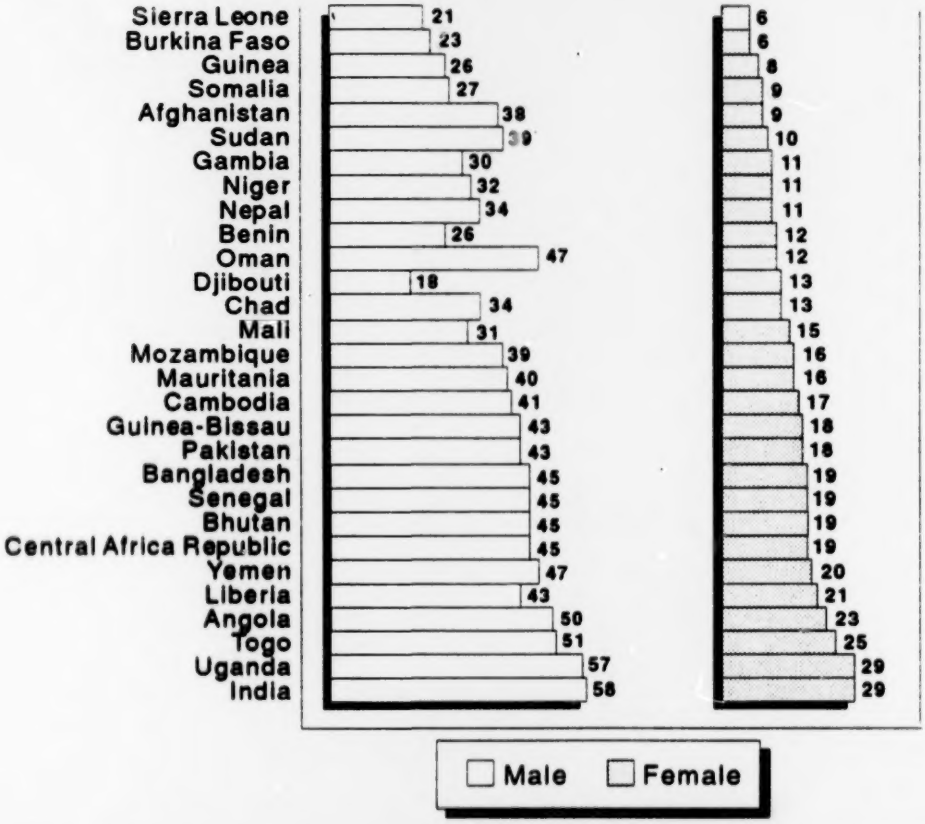
The first significant educational injustice requiring urgent attention is related to gender disparity. World education indicators show that girls still have much less access than boys to education at all levels. In 1990, girls represented approximately 70 per cent of the 160 million children who lacked access to basic education. Gender disparities in enrolment are still particularly high in Africa (with the exception of Lesotho and Namibia where disparities are actually reversed in favour of girls), South Asia and the Middle East.[17] In most other regions, including the industrialized countries of the North, disparities are not as frequent or non-existent.

As far as global literacy is concerned, indicators display even higher levels of gender disparity. Recent figures suggest that adult illiteracy affects about 960 million people worldwide, of whom about 700 million are women. In 1985, few countries had male literacy rates below 20 per cent while at least 17 countries had female literacy rates below this level.

Today, in at least 29 countries, female literacy rates still remain under 30 per cent, while male literacy rates in the same countries are at least twice as high (Figure 3). South Asia, for example, where female literacy levels were about 49 per cent in 1985, will face an uphill challenge unless countries in the region begin to mobilize resources to remedy their female illiteracy problem. In sub-Saharan Africa, female literacy rates were 56 per cent in 1985, just under rates in the Middle East (58 per cent), but far below those in South East Asia (73 per cent) and Latin America (95 per cent). A review of schooling by gender among individuals over 25 years of age indicates that, in 1980, women averaged only about one year of schooling in Africa, South Asia and the Arab countries.[18]

Despite the remarkable progress in access to basic education made during the last three decades in developing countries, gender gaps continue to be high at all levels of the educational system (Figure 4), particularly after the first three years of primary school. The reasons for the persistent gender disparities are often complex and specific to the regional, national and local contexts.[19] However, current research in Africa and South Asia suggests three common contributing factors:

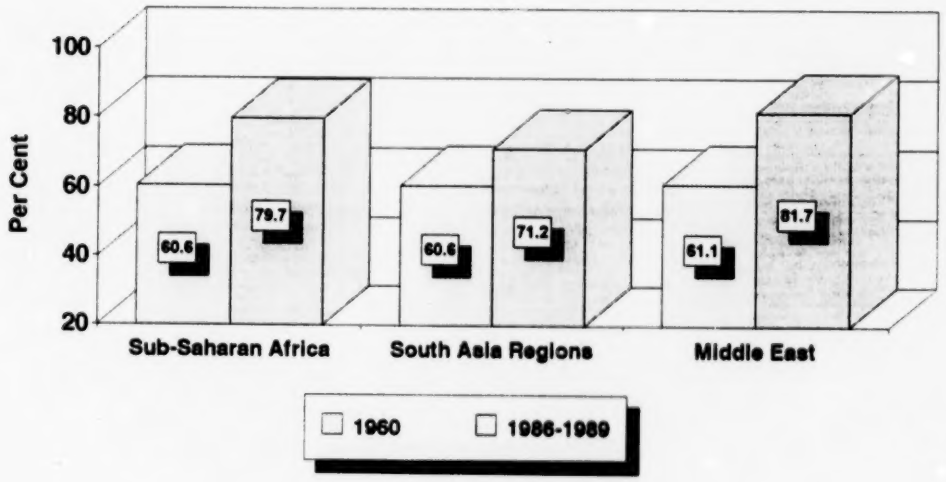
Figure 3: ADULT LITERACY* AND FEMALE LITERACY 30 PER CENT OR LOWER
(Selected Countries, 1991)



Source: UNDP, *Human Development Report 1991*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1991.
* 15 years of age or older

- **Persistent rural and urban poverty** plays a major role in determining whether girls have access to school. In the majority of poor households, because a daughter's labour makes an important contribution to household survival, the cost of sending her to school is too high. Cultural and economic constraints placed on girls and women — both at home and in the labour market — also prevent girls from going to school;
- **Geographical factors,** such as the distance of schools from home, also play a decisive role in whether girls go to school in many developing countries. In remote rural areas, parents will often discourage their daughters from walking long distances to the local school for fear that public exposure could result in their being molested or violated;

Figure 4: PRIMARY SCHOOL FEMALE ENROLMENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF MALE ENROLMENT (By Region, 1960 and 1986-1989)



Source: UNICEF, *State of the World's Children 1992*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1992.

- **In-school factors** also contribute to making schooling a negative experience for girls in many countries: teachers are frequently male; classes are often dominated by aggressive and ill-behaved boys; the syllabus is still strongly biased towards the male child; and not much attention is paid to the girls' learning needs. The lack of schedules flexible enough to allow girls to combine schooling with household tasks and the shortage of female teachers contribute significantly to the high number of girls who drop out of school at critical stages in the primary and secondary school cycles.

To extend the right to a basic education to girls, educational interventions should target this most neglected group of learners as the main beneficiaries of programmes. In addition, their education cannot be separated from the broader sociopolitical context: the status of girls and women within the society as a whole is an issue that needs to be addressed.

The following is a list of already-tested strategies for helping girls gain a basic education. These strategies also concern issues of school access, retention and achievement. In particular it will be necessary to:

- locate schools closer to communities; make them safer learning environments; make facilities culturally appropriate; and, when necessary, establish single-sex classes;
- promote the recruitment of more female teachers and provide incentives to encourage them to teach in remote rural schools or poor urban districts. Local recruitment and placement of female teachers may also help them to remain in marginalized communities;
- reduce the real cost of basic education for parents by providing scholarships, free textbooks, uniforms, and flexible schedules to allow girls to spend part of the day working at home;
- develop gender-relevant curricula by introducing topics that are of interest to girls and coincide with their aspirations;
- increase community participation in the management and improvement of local schools. Encourage community leaders to assume responsibility for the maintenance of the school and the formulation of day-to-day policies. The decentralization of school management and decision-making would help communities to gain or regain ownership of their schools;
- mobilize local resources in support of schools. In remote areas, parents who are illiterate need to be informed of the benefits accruing from their daughters' schooling. Prepare a community-shared action plan for social mobilization, and use multi-channel approaches to spread positive messages to all members of the community about the benefits of girls' education;
- design systems to support the needs of female students, including the installation of water and sanitation facilities and the introduction of flexible schedules, gender-based monitoring and evaluation systems, and specially designed instruction; and
- support multi-channel approaches for delivering basic education to girls. Informal, non-formal and low-cost alternative formal delivery systems should be encouraged, especially for difficult-to-reach groups and out-of-school, homebound girls.

The BRAC schools in Bangladesh (Box 2),[20] whose students are 70 per cent female, are community-based non-governmental initiatives which combine most of these elements. Their

Box 2 **BRAC SCHOOLS IN BANGLADESH**

Some 68 million people in rural areas of Bangladesh live below the poverty line. Until recently, most impoverished rural children received little or no schooling. Their labour was needed for household survival. Girls, expected to marry young and join their husbands' families, often never went to school at all. To meet the needs of these children, the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) began experimental schools in 1985. The schools implement two primary school models: the Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE), which targets 8- to 10-year-olds who have never attended school or who have dropped out; and the Primary Education for Older Children (PEOC), which is aimed at 11- to 14-year-olds who have never attended school.

NFPE provides three years of basic education, including literacy, numeracy and community-awareness. Games, singing and sports are part of the regular curriculum. In the PEOC programme, nearly 75 per cent of the students are unmarried girls. The NFPE curriculum is adopted, but taught in two instead of three years. In both types of schools, classes are held six days a week, 2½ - 3 hours per day, with only short vacation breaks. The setting is simple. Buildings are made of woven bamboo or mud. Children sit on mats and are given slates, pencils, textbooks, notebooks and lapboards. Teachers are provided with a blackboard, a stool and a trunk where school materials can be kept.

Several principles have been adhered to in setting up BRAC schools. First, the community must ask for the school and provide the building, thus proving their readiness to support schooling for their children. The school building is, in turn, rented by BRAC, which ensures its maintenance. Second, parents actively participate in decisions about their children's education: they help to schedule classes at times that will not interfere with the children's household and field chores; and they also are involved in the selection of the locally recruited (and hence well-known and trusted) teachers. Third, BRAC will not start a school in a village where no one is qualified to teach.

Prospective teachers must have completed nine years of schooling and be married. Because 70 per cent of the students are girls, women are preferred as teachers. They initially receive 12 days of training at a residential training centre and then on-the-job training by BRAC field staff. After one year, they participate in a six-day refresher course. BRAC prepares teaching materials, a suggested daily lesson plan and other guidance. Once a month, teachers from about 20 neighbouring communities meet with field supervisors to discuss their classroom experiences and problems. Significantly, although parents — particularly mothers — are illiterate, they originally sought their children's education and now actively support the schools, meeting once a month to discuss their children's progress.

BRAC calculated in 1992 that the total cost per enrolled child per year was less than US$ 17, whereas an independent study estimated less than US$ 14. A third study found that the overall unit cost per pupil was roughly equal to that of state primary schools in rural areas. However, unlike state schools where teachers' salaries normally absorb 85 per cent or more of recurrent expenditures, BRAC schools allocate to this item only a small share of the total budget. This is not because of an unfavourable student-teacher ratio (class size is limited to 30 students), but rather because BRAC teachers earn considerably less than state teachers do. Reasons for this are peculiar to the Bangladesh context: (a) most villages appear to have at least two or three women with the academic credentials needed to teach NFPE; (b) suitable jobs for academically qualified women are scarce at the village level; and (c) the domestic responsibilities sustained by these women make part-time BRAC work especially attractive. Savings on salaries are transferred to the management and supervisory functions of the schools, which help to enhance their efficiency and the effectiveness of investments in other elements of the BRAC non-formal education system.

BRAC has been extremely successful: in eight years, it has opened over 10,000 schools, and over 90 per cent of its pupils have continued on in the state system.

success can be measured by the support given by the community, particularly by the mothers who, although illiterate, encourage their daughters to attend school.

Educating the Children of Minority Communities and Indigenous Populations

Ethnic minorities and indigenous populations with special educational needs — the Australian aborigines, the Inuit of Alaska and northern Canada, the Khmer of Southeast Asia, the tribes in the hills of Vietnam, the pygmies of West Africa, the bushmen of the Kalahari, the Mayas of Guatemala (Box 3),[21] the Quechuas and Aymaras in the Andes, the Gypsies of Europe, and countless similar groups elsewhere — all represent only a small fraction of the population of these regions. Their distinctive culture and language have contributed to their isolation from the mainstream educational system. Respect for their rights and recognition of their cultural plight constitute two of the most important educational challenges of our age. How we ultimately guarantee their right to an appropriate education, which would enable them to be self-sufficient in a world of rapid social change, will be the real test of our sincerity and determination to comply with the spirit and letter of the CRC.

Children of minority groups have recently gained a priority position on the world's political agenda. The CRC, especially Article 2, establishes that national governments need to take an active role in protecting children from all forms of discrimination. No State Party should allow a child within its jurisdiction to lead a disadvantaged life as the price to pay for belonging to an ethnic minority.

In this respect, the situation of the Gypsy communities in Europe is emblematic. Recent events in Europe, particularly the increase of migration from Eastern to Western European countries (especially from Romania and former Yugoslavia), have put in evidence the deteriorating conditions of the Gypsy community as a whole. Although 'Gypsies' constitute a broad grouping of nomadic or semi-nomadic individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds, they nonetheless share a number of identifiable problems. Especially in the area of education, it would be extremely worthwhile for governments to join together to forge a transnational strategy, based on a common set of guidelines and a comprehensive analysis of Gypsy children's educational needs. As yet few efforts seem to have been made in this direction.

Educational policies for Gypsy and nomadic children implemented by European governments have so far been unsuccessful. A number of indicators attest to this failure.[22]

Box 3

Escuelas Mayas

The Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes that every child has the right "in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, [and] to use his or her own language" (Article 30).[23] In Guatemala, this principle has provided an excellent basis for education. *Escuelas Mayas* are private schools — run, supported and financed by the members of the community — that combine government-approved and Mayan curriculums. Spontaneous community-based initiatives, these schools offer instruction in the regional dialect as well as in Spanish and utilize culturally sensitive teaching techniques and materials. Children of Mayan descent learn about Mayan culture, history, music, art and crafts. Teachers are recruited from local communities and trained in the history and traditions of the Mayan culture.

Although 90 per cent of the Guatemalan population is of Mayan descent, classes in state schools are taught in Spanish. Languages and cultural diversity are the major problems encountered in assisting Mayan children. There are 22 Mayan languages, which, in turn, include 200 dialects. Prior to the introduction of *Escuelas Mayas*, only 30 per cent of school-age children attended primary school. Many communities had no schools; most children worked; and parents did not encourage their children — especially their daughters — to attend schools. As a result, illiteracy rates ranged from 52 to 93 per cent.

Involving parents has been an important element in the success of the new schools. Each school is trying to develop its own curriculum in the local Mayan dialect, using whatever resources are available and affordable within the community. Parents and neighbours together plan the school hours so that children can work when needed. Most schools have high female enrolment. Girls tend to stay in school until they finish their primary education; some of them even continue with their secondary education.

Parents seem happier with the Mayan schools than with the traditional state schools. Now, boys and girls are learning to read and write in their own language and are also acquiring other skills that will realistically serve them in the future and enable them to contribute to the development of their village or neighbourhood.

The popularity of the Mayan schools extends to non-Mayan families, some of whom send their children to these schools in preference to state schools. The schools' Mayan cultural content and bilingual instruction serve as a model for reaching Mayan-speaking communities with an appropriate and culturally acceptable education. *Escuelas Mayas* have met the challenge contained in Article 29.1.c of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which provides that the education of the child shall be directed to "the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values...".

(a) **Primary enrolment and completion levels** (Table 2) are, with few exceptions, far below national average. Primary enrolment rates in European Economic Community (EEC) countries averaged only about 35 per cent in 1989. Moreover, enrolment rates mask very low completion rates in the majority of cases. In Bulgaria, where enrolment of Gypsy children in primary school is high (95 per cent in 1990-1991), only 30 per cent actually complete their schooling. In Greece in 1986, 15 per cent of Gypsy children were enrolled in school, but only

Table 2: GYPSY PRIMARY ENROLMENT RATES
(Selected European Countries, 1990-1991)

	Percentage
Western European Countries	
Eire (1984)	50
France	30
Greece (1986)	15
Italy	35
Spain (1987)	50
United Kingdom	40
EEC (1989)	35
Central and Eastern European Countries	
Bulgaria	95
Czechoslovakia (1985)	75
Hungary	50

Source: Costarelli, S., 'Gypsy Children in Europe: An Overview' in Costarelli, S. (Ed.), *Children of Minorities - Gypsies*, UNICEF, International Child Development Centre, Florence, 1993.

half of this group completed primary education. In former Yugoslavia in 1986, 80 per cent of Gypsy children did not complete primary school; in Hungary in 1991, the percentage was 50 per cent.

In Czechoslovakia, on the other hand, high enrolment rates and a reasonably high retention rate (50 per cent) may reflect the outcome of a successful campaign to encourage parents to send their children to preschool. The majority of Gypsy children who attended kindergarten went on to enrol in elementary school. Kindergarten attendance has also proved to be a successful means of changing negative parental attitudes towards schooling, and it may suggest a feasible strategy for lessening the prejudice against formal education, which continues to be one of the major obstacles to servicing Gypsy children.

(b) **Transition rates from primary to secondary school** are either extremely low or non-existent. In Germany in 1985, only 1 per cent of Gypsy children attended secondary school.

(c) **Illiteracy rates** are high. Only a small proportion of Gypsy children leaving school can read or write. In 1985, 80 per cent of EEC adult Gypsies were illiterate. Adult Gypsy illiteracy

rates for Spain in 1987 were 80 per cent; for France in 1991, 65 per cent; for Bulgaria in 1991, 50 per cent (for adults over 30 years of age). In Greece, 80 per cent of the school-age Gypsy population was officially illiterate in 1986.

Although the causes of this situation vary, they may be broadly summarized as follows:

- the teaching methods and content are inappropriate for children coming from a predominantly oral tradition;
- nearly all national school systems teach in the national language and ignore the Gypsy children's language and cultural backgrounds;
- teachers are not aware of, nor adequately trained to handle, the special cultural needs of Gypsy children;
- economic and cultural pressures cause Gypsy children to drop out of school at an early age to earn a living; and
- ingrained social prejudice has contributed to labelling the Gypsy child as mentally retarded. In Czechoslovakia in 1980, 17.1 per cent of school-age Gypsies attended special schools for the mentally disabled, a percentage which reached 27.6 per cent in 1985. In Germany, 40 per cent of national Gypsy children attended special schools for the mentally disabled in 1985, whereas the non-Gypsy average was 3 per cent.

Only the removal of economic and social pressures from the Gypsy child's survival agenda will make school attendance and completion acceptable options. Unfortunately, children still play an important role as breadwinners in the average Gypsy family, which is often characterized by high levels of both adult unemployment and dependence on the social security system. Because of this situation, young Gypsies may go out onto the street to steal, an art learned and practiced from an early age and considered by many to be a legitimate means to contribute to their family's subsistence.[24]

Educating the Children of Nomadic Groups

Pastoralists or nomads represent from 12 to 16 per cent of the total population living in the arid and semi-arid regions of East and West Africa. The total nomad population in Africa is currently estimated at about 25 million, a sizable proportion of whom are children.

Table 3: TOTAL POPULATION AND NOMAD POPULATION
(Selected African Countries, 1992)

	Total Population (Millions)	Nomad Population (Millions)	% of Nomad to Total Population
Burkina Faso	9.0	0.5	6
Chad	5.7	1.0	20
Djibouti	0.5	0.1	15
Ethiopia	49.2	5.0	10
Kenya	24.0	3.5	15
Mali	9.2	1.0	11
Mauritania	2.0	0.3	15
Niger	7.7	1.0	13
Senegal	7.3	1.0	13
Somalia	7.5	4.5	60
Sudan	25.2	3.5	14
Tanzania	27.3	0.5	1
Uganda	18.8	0.6	3
Total	193.4	22.5	12

Source: Bonfiglioli, A. and Watson, C., 'Pastoralists At A Crossroads: Survival and Development Issues in African Pastoralism', UNICEF/UNESCO, NOPA Project, Kenya, November, 1992.

In most countries, nomads are minorities (Table 3) whose ethnic identities, life styles, cultural values and languages differ from those of the dominant groups. The welfare of nomads is often negatively affected by increasing differentials in access to health, education and other essential services.[25] Malnutrition, sickness, illiteracy and vulnerability to external influences continue to mar their lives. The only entities capable of mobilizing sufficient resources to provide major services to these minorities, whose basic rights have persistently been denied, remain the nations where they live.

Both formal and non-formal educational interventions on behalf of nomads have been weak or non-existent. Effective educational services are difficult to provide, not only because of the high level of mobility and dispersal of these communities, but also because of their special needs in terms of teaching methods, curricula and language of instruction. Stretched to provide educational services to their majority groups, governments have balked at the additional cost of providing special services to groups of nomad learners.

Schools in small rural towns or villages in the pastoralist zones have mainly been filled by the children of traders and civil servants, with only a small segment of school-age

children from the wealthier families. A limited number of boarding schools have been set up on an experimental basis. Parents, however, have been reluctant to send their children to boarding school because they need their labour for the maintenance of household productivity. Moreover, parents view the modern school as a culturally alienating place. 'Tent' or 'mobile' schools are among the more interesting and flexible experiments attempted in rural areas. In Mali, Niger and Mauritania, Koranic schools have been used to provide general education. Most experiences in pastoralist education have been characterized by a trial-and-error approach and lack a coherent, well-thought-out plan.[26]

Educational programmes for nomads have failed primarily because decision makers have sought to use education as a tool for transforming nomad populations into sedentary ones. Teachers have generally been recruited from extra-pastoralist backgrounds, and their ideology has clashed with the values of the pastoral societies. This has led nomad parents and children to reject what teachers teach as representing foreign values that are threatening to indigenous culture and beliefs.

A new approach is required for adapting modern education to the special needs of nomad societies. It is important that an appropriate curriculum be defined in line with the values and aspirations of the nomads themselves. Education should be perceived as a means for enhancing life and survival and not for changing communities. An appropriate curriculum would not only transmit reading and writing skills, but also civic awareness, management and accounting skills, basic health and nutrition concepts, and sound environmental, agricultural and animal husbandry techniques. An interesting model in this respect is the Tostan basic learning project in Senegal (Box 4).[27]

Various forms of tent schools — perhaps the most viable form of schooling for nomad children — should be introduced. However, the following guidelines should be adopted to make this kind of education more responsive to the social and cultural needs of nomads:

- parents should be involved in the selection of what is to be taught;
- the programme should be flexible and, as far as possible, fit in with seasonal rhythms and changes in production cycles;
- the curriculum should provide nomad children with survival skills, including information on animal husbandry, herding and agriculture; and
- special efforts need to be made to encourage girls to attend school and complete their primary education.

Box 4 **TOSTAN: A BASIC LEARNING PROJECT IN SENEGAL**

One of Africa's most promising basic learning models is called *Tostan* — a Woloff word meaning 'breakthrough' or 'hatching of an egg'. Initially, a literacy project, *Tostan* has evolved into a programme to spread knowledge about basic services for family and community development. By participating in six modules (of two months each) over two years, women, men and young people learn how to bring about changes in their village or neighbourhood and how to improve family life through health measures, improved hygiene, gardening and management of the family economy. They also learn leadership skills, how to organize village projects from the initial feasibility study to project management, problem solving or avoidance, and market strategies.

Tostan teachers are called 'facilitators' as their principal role is to encourage participants in their discussions and learning activities. They are chosen by the people of their own village and given a one-month preparatory course before they begin the first module of instruction. Lessons are taught in Woloff or Pulaar, the languages of the region. Participants learn to read and write in their own language, but use the Latin rather than the Arabic alphabet so that they can go on to learn French if they so choose. Facilitators make use of theatre, stories, pictures, games and flip charts to motivate participants.

More than half of the participants are women. Although women in Senegal play an important role socially and economically, a female illiteracy rate of more than 80 per cent seriously hampers national development. Gender disparities in primary education are still apparent. Although enrolment rose from 27 per cent in 1960 to 57.9 per cent in 1989-1990, only 32.4 per cent of pupils are girls. One of the goals of *Tostan* is to attain a 60 per cent female literacy rate in Senegal by the year 2000. Often classes are divided into discussion groups so that women feel more comfortable expressing themselves in front of male participants. The topics discussed help them to participate in village improvement activities. Thus, not only do women learn practical skills, but they also gradually gain confidence in themselves.

During the first module, the participants begin learning to read, write and to use numbers while discussing problem identification, problem solving and planning skills. The facilitator, for example, discusses a specific problem, such as a hole in the school's roof, showing students a series of pictures representing the steps needed to remedy the problem. Then participants move on to abstract understanding and writing, using the words and concepts utilized to describe the situation. During the second module, participants study the alphabet, syllables, words, sentences and texts; they continue learning simple addition and subtraction; they learn to tell the time and to use a calendar; and they apply the skills learned in the earlier module to village health problems. The third module (fifth and sixth months) moves participants on to learning about basic health techniques such as oral rehydration therapy and vaccinations. They learn advanced reading, writing and numeracy skills and other problem-solving methods. In the last three modules, facilitators guide participants through much more complex ways of developing their community. In the fourth module, participants learn management of financial and material resources; in the fifth, about the management of human resources, including elements of leadership and group dynamics; and in the sixth, how to carry out feasibility studies for small-scale village or community projects.

The non-formal approach and participatory learning methods of *Tostan* have led to high attendance and enthusiasm among participants. Behavioural changes are evident as students gain confidence during discussions and become leaders in changing community conditions. As they progress, they even travel to nearby villages, teaching their neighbours about hygiene and sanitation, oral rehydration and immunization. Other villagers, seeing the changes in their neighbours, decide to have a *Tostan* learning project for their own village.

Skeptical parents will have to be persuaded that schools are adequately supervised and safe, especially for their daughters. Women teachers will need to be recruited in larger numbers and deployed more efficiently to ensure an adequate level of supervision, especially in boarding schools.

Two phases are suggested for reforming basic education services to nomad groups in Africa:

(a) **Diagnosis and preparation:**

- carry out surveys to assess current school attendance, parental attitudes, achievement levels and teachers' characteristics;
- design an appropriate curriculum with parental and community involvement to include useful life-support and survival skills;
- develop adequate in-service training courses for teachers to prepare them for work with nomad communities; and
- initiate a broad programme of social mobilization among parents and nomad communities to advocate more schooling for their children. Special emphasis should be placed on the need to educate girls.

(b) **Implementation:**

- carry out intensive training of male and female teachers;
- prepare special teacher's manuals and teaching materials;
- set up parent-teacher associations to support special nomadic schools;
- construct more schools in areas that are still unserviced;
- create special mobile primary schools (tent schools) and evaluate their effectiveness in reaching nomad children;
- provide adequate learning resources for every school, and organize classes; and
- develop an adequate monitoring and evaluation system for tracking children's progress through the system.

Meeting the Cost of Educational Rights

Recent studies carried out in the United Kingdom at the Institute for Development Studies, Sussex University, have tried to estimate the cost "for all children of primary school-age in developing countries to be given primary schooling" at a minimally acceptable standard by the year 2000.[28] They concluded that in those developing countries that have not reached

universal primary education, the attainment of primary schooling for all (SFA) by the year 2000 would require an additional 156 million primary school places, or a 30 per cent increase in the number of schools that existed in 1990. Sub-Saharan Africa, for demographic and other reasons, will need to double its number of primary school places during the 1990s to meet the SFA goal by 2000.

Most low- and middle-income countries could fulfill every child's right to a basic education over the next 10 years by applying education and fiscal policy reforms and by giving somewhat higher budget priority to primary education. However, where existing gross enrolment rates are below 50 per cent, as is the case in some sub-Saharan countries, bridging the enrolment gap and keeping up with high population growth rates will require substantial technical and financial assistance from outside donors. Ultimately, each nation will need to establish its own education policies and programmes, setting aside the resources and trained manpower needed to achieve SFA by the end of the decade. Reliance on foreign assistance alone will not solve the problem. Countries must encourage and carry out comprehensive internal reforms in education management, administration and policy-making if the ambitious goals set forth at the Jomtien conference and the World Summit for Children are to be achieved within the foreseeable future.

It also bears repeating that the problem of universalizing school enrolment may not only be one of providing adequate facilities but is also likely to involve persuading parents to send their children to school, especially in countries where girls are deliberately kept out of school and where economic considerations prevent children from going to school.

The additional cost of achieving SFA by 2000 is estimated to be more than US$ 60 billion, which is less than the estimated US$ 100 billion spent on the Gulf War, for example. This figure is likely to increase to about US$ 140 billion by the year 2005 (assuming that unit costs and average transition rates to secondary education remain constant). If one adds the costs of improvements in the **quality** of basic education, additional expenditures will be required in many countries; but these costs can be kept down if selected education reforms are introduced in a timely manner. A significant part of the cost of SFA could be met through normal budgetary growth together with a conscious shifting of national expenditures from military and other non-essential investments to education and other social services that contribute to the improvement of the quality of life as well as to the productivity of a nation's human resources.

If all countries were willing to implement most of the cost-saving reforms suggested (such as those recommended for Africa in the following section) and increased their budget allocations to basic education by 2 per cent, only an additional US$ 17.5 billion in external aid would be needed over the next 10 years to finance SFA. However, not all cost reforms will be possible, especially in some African countries where real public expenditures per capita continue to decline. Perhaps 36 of the poorest countries will require additional funding to encourage them to adopt the strategies and policies needed to achieve SFA by 2000.

A similar projection for Africa's schooling needs alone suggests that with a modest US$6 billion to US$7 billion annual investment in basic education, the majority of Africa's school-age population could gain access to primary school by the year 2000.

Achieving Schooling for All in Africa and Other Regions by 2000

Twelve years after the *Lagos Plan of Action* documented an impressive increase in human capital investment by most African countries — and barely two years after the 1991 milestone UNESCO/Organization of African Unity/Economic Commission for Africa meeting for African Ministers of Education in Dakar to plan a long-term commitment to improving African education — there is no cause for complacency: the goals projected for primary, secondary and higher education in Africa are far from being reached. Economic decline, rapid population growth, migration, poor management, inappropriate fiscal policies, and other factors have prevented many countries from satisfying the increased demand for educational services, especially at the primary school level. This situation has been partly exacerbated by the tendency of some donors to favour technical, secondary and higher education over basic or primary education and by the low priority given by the countries themselves to basic education.

Thus, many African countries have ceased to be effective learning environments for the vast majority of the children living there. UNICEF and other Jomtien partners concur that educational systems in Africa present the largest problems worldwide and deserve special focus during this decade.

A comprehensive strategy for tackling the need for basic education for all of Africa's children was elaborated recently in a paper prepared for the International Conference on Assistance to African Children held in Dakar (Senegal) in November 1992, and subsequently published in the book, *Africa's Children, Africa's Future.*[29] The paper begins by pointing out

that no single packet or 'magic bullet' exists for dealing with the problem of basic education in Africa. By definition, education involves slow, long-term and highly sensitive processes that are subject to social and political controls and influenced by other systemic factors frequently beyond community or parental control. The strategy proposed is both specific and sensitive to the cultural and geographical needs of the African regions considered. It is based on the notion that the quickest and most cost-effective way to help African children obtain access to basic education is to give credibility to Africa's education systems. Because Africa's primary education infrastructure represents a one-time capital investment that cannot be easily recovered, existing primary school services will need to be revitalized. A (minimum) two-pronged strategy for making viable existing primary education services is suggested:

(a) As a first step, countries willing to reform their basic educational system are encouraged to carry out a comprehensive evaluation of their educational needs by collecting and analysing local data and identifying priorities. This should help to remove the 'guess element' that has hitherto characterized the education policy planning in the majority of developing countries, and enable these countries to allocate more rationally the scarce resources available for the provision of basic education services.

(b) A second necessary step is to revitalize existing primary schools, which is considered the quickest way to give children the minimum basic education needed for survival in their fast-changing societies. Low levels of efficiency, underutilized capacity, poor teaching quality due to poorly trained and underpaid teachers, the lack of such basic learning materials as exercise books and textbooks are some of the commonly observed characteristics of many African primary schools. The major negative impact of these factors, especially in rural primary schools, has led both parents and pupils to question the relevance of schooling. Regional disparities are wide, with sub-Saharan Africa the most disadvantaged area.

A more efficient use of existing facilities and a reduction of drop-out and repetition rates would help to make schools accessible to a significant number of children, especially to girls who are still excluded from primary education in many African countries. In addition, five reforms have been proposed for enhancing in a cost effective manner the quality and effectiveness of Africa's primary education systems (Table 4).

Reinvesting in Africa's primary schools will have a significant impact on both individual and national development, especially in countries where enrolment rates are still below 50 per cent. A sizeable proportion of African's wealth lies in the untapped capacity of its people. Historically, nations that have been able to sustain social and economic

Table 4: FRAMEWORK FOR THE REFORM OF AFRICA'S PRIMARY EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Cost-saving Reform	Cost-shifting Reform	Quality-enhancing Reform	Management and Supervisory reform	Community-based Reform
Reduce teacher-pupil ratios over a 10-year period through the introduction of double shifts at the primary and secondary levels. Increase class size over a 10-year period wherever the current level is 40 pupils or less in primary and secondary schools, and 30 or less in teacher-training and vocational schools. Reduce primary teacher's unit costs over a 10-year period through increased use of self-study sessions, teaching assistants, parents and other community helpers.	Decrease the recurrent unit costs of primary and secondary schools over a 10-year period by increasing private contributions. Decrease capital costs of classroom construction at primary level over a 5-year period through increased community support. Freeze higher education subsidies at current levels.	Increase the annual expenditure on learning resources over a 5-year period to at least US$ 5 per child at all levels. Increase teachers' salaries in real terms where possible over a 10-year period. Reduce repetition rates over a 10-year period at all levels while keeping drop-out rates unchanged and allowing promotion rates to increase concomitantly. Reduce drop-out rates at all levels over a 10-year period and allow promotion rates to increase concomitantly.	Restructure and decentralize the administrative and management functions of the Ministry of Education to the regional and district levels. Develop or improve a monitoring and evaluation system to permit the timely gathering of appropriate data on the performance of national education systems. Train or re-train managers and administrators at both the school and ministry levels. Train and empower an effective cadre of supervisors to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the educational component of the national plan of action at all levels.	Enact national legislation to enable devolution of responsibility for the maintenance of primary schools from highly centralized state controls to the community. Create and encourage parent-teacher associations or other community groups in all primary and secondary schools. Encourage parent-community representation at all levels of the education management system in keeping with the recent moves towards more democratic and accountable government.

development have also emphasized education and training to increase their population's capacity to accumulate knowledge, communicate information, and work together productively. A growing awareness of the intrinsic value of education to each individual has added an important moral dimension to the case for basic education for all. The CRC, the World Conference on Education for All and the World Summit for Children have all helped to renew the emphasis on the need for African governments to establish basic education as a fundamental human right, especially for persistently marginalized groups.

Finding the Resources for Africa

If participating African governments can be persuaded at least to allocate existing levels of expenditure to their primary and secondary educational budgets, and to carry out all or most of the reforms suggested — above all, providing the necessary resources to meet the increased demand for primary school education for all by the year 2000 — it is estimated that an additional US$ 6 billion over the next 10 years will be required. Allowing for inflation, a further investment of about US$ 750 million per year (US$ 7.5 billion for 10 years) will be needed to achieve the (minimum) two-pronged SFA strategy, as outlined above. It may be assumed that governments willing to do this would also be willing to meet some of this extra cost from local resources — up to, say, 30 per cent (approximately US$ 225 million) of this additional amount per year. It is not unreasonable to assume that increased community participation and the involvement of the private sector at the local level would be able to absorb another 20 per cent (US$ 150 million) of the additional cost per year. This would leave about 50 per cent (US$ 375 million per year) to be raised from other sources, including multilateral and bilateral aid contributions. An additional amount — roughly estimated to be about US$ 250 million per year — will be necessary to promote and implement specific non-formal and other innovative basic educational alternatives, including literacy projects for those countries unable to invest in formal schooling and in the attendant costly infrastructure. Here, creative, alternative stand-by delivery systems will have to be developed to fill the gap.

One such alternative — second-chance learning centres for primary school drop-outs in rural areas — is discussed in Box 5. A summary of a number of cost-effective strategies to upgrade the quality of primary schools in rural areas, with emphasis on teacher training and production and distribution of learning materials can be found in Box 6.

Box 5

SECOND-CHANCE LEARNING CENTRES FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL DROP-OUTS IN RURAL AREAS IN AFRICA

In most African countries, especially the nations in the sub-Saharan region, many children drop out of primary school before they complete a minimum of four years. Many are forced out of school for economic reasons; others are unable to continue their education because there are no appropriate facilities close to their communities. Second-chance learning centres, which are mainly targeted at school drop-outs between 9 and 15 years of age who live in rural areas, represent a cost-effective, alternative method for making basic education services accessible to out-of-school children.

Modeled after the *Djamaa Centres* developed in Conakry (Guinea), second-chance learning centres are flexible and community-based. The centres are established in buildings donated by each participating community, which ensures community involvement from the initial project phase. A government or a donor can grant funds to meet the cost of refurbishing and preparing each facility.

The community is also actively involved in the education process, increasing incentive for participating in this initiative. Unemployed secondary school graduates or other individuals with secondary level or equivalent education can be recruited from each participating community to serve as teacher-facilitators. They are to be paid a stipend for their services to the community, and time served will be credited towards further training in the vocational area. The young women and men selected to teach need to be given a well-designed, short but highly focused, practical training course in teaching methods. Their ongoing training will then be carried out through an in-service distance education module utilizing instructional materials specially designed for use with an 'interactive radio' learning component.

It has been proposed that four countries be identified to participate in the first demonstration phase of this project. An area-based approach will be used, and precedence will be given to rural areas with high drop-out rates and elevated gender disparities. During the first three years of implementation, no more than five centres will be established in each of the four countries. Together, these 20 centres are expected to benefit approximately 20,000 school drop-outs. The performance of each centre will be monitored and an evaluation made at the end of three years to determine whether further investment is warranted for 'going to scale'. If the evaluation is positive, separate funding will be sought from local and international sources for expansion and maintenance of already-existing centres.

The project components can be summarized as follows:

- selection and training of teacher-facilitators — 1,000 per country;
- design and production of appropriate learning materials for about 50,000 students;
- identification and preparation of basic learning facilities, about 20 in total;
- mobilization of school drop-outs using the mass media. Campaigns may be carried out in four countries;
- preparation of materials, staff training and implementation of an interactive radio component (for four countries);
- monitoring and evaluation of each centre during phases one and two.

Table 5: SECOND-CHANCE LEARNING CENTRES:
ESTIMATED FOUR-YEAR BUDGET FOR EACH COUNTRY

	Thousands of US$ per Year				
	1993	1994	1995	1996	Total
Preparation of five centres	0.200	0.200	0.100	0.000	0.500
Production of materials (for 20,000 learners)	0.400	0.100	0.050	0.050	0.600
Training 1,000 facilitators	0.300	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.400
Interactive radio component	0.500	0.300	0.100	0.100	1.000
Mobilization of drop-outs	0.100	0.050	0.025	0.025	0.200
Evaluation and monitoring	0.100	0.100	0.050	0.150	0.400
Total	1.600	0.850	0.325	0.325	3.100

The estimated budget for each national project (Table 5) covers four years: three for the demonstration phase of the project and a fourth to allow sufficient time to mobilize national and international resources for the 'going to scale' phase. The total cost for the implementation of these projects in four countries over a four-year period would amount to about US$12.64 million. This projection is based on the assumption that stable economic conditions and comparable cost levels will continue to prevail in each participating country.

A proposal for financing of this technical package is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: SECOND-CHANCE LEARNING CENTRES:
PROPOSED SOURCES OF FINANCING

	Percentage	Millions of US$
Government	40	1.26
Donors	50	1.58
Community	10	0.32
Total	100	3.16

Box 6

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF AFRICAN PRIMARY EDUCATION

It has been argued (and substantiated by recent studies) that the revitalization of primary schools in Africa must begin with improvements in the quality of existing schools. This could be accomplished in a cost-effective and timely manner by: (a) providing in-service teacher-training courses to upgrade and retrain underqualified teachers; (b) providing assistance to help countries improve their production of appropriate low-cost learning materials so that each child would be guaranteed a packet of basic learning materials, including textbooks and exercise books and other writing materials.

Since initiating such a strategy on a national scale would require substantial expenditures, a smaller, area-based approach may be more suitable in the first instance. A few rural school districts and a parallel group of marginalized urban school districts could be selected and carefully monitored in each country. A positive evaluation of the area-based approach could provide the experience and justification needed for 'scaling' up to the national level and be used to mobilize the additional donor support for this final phase. This kind of affordable and doable strategy should be easily applicable to countries where the political will to improve the quality of basic education exists and where donors are willing to provide the initial funds needed.

The cost of this approach in one country is estimated in Table 7, and proposed sources of financing are shown in Table 8. For four countries over four years, the total cost would be US$26 million.

Table 7: IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF AFRICAN PRIMARY EDUCATION: ESTIMATED FOUR-YEAR BUDGET FOR EACH COUNTRY

	US$ Millions per Year				
	1993	1994	1995	1996	Total
Upgrading of teachers (about 10,000 teachers)	2.0	1.0	0.5	0.5	4.0
Production and distribution of learning materials (for about 400,000 pupils at US$5 per pupil)	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.5	2.5
Total	3.0	1.5	1.0	1.0	6.5

Table 8: IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF AFRICAN PRIMARY EDUCATION: PROPOSED SOURCES OF FINANCING

	Percentage	Millions of US$
Government	40	2.60
Donors	50	3.25
Community	10	0.65
Total	100	6.50

Since many governments are reluctant to spend money on the implementation of new alternatives to formal education, donors willing to promote creative innovations in basic education should assume most of these additional costs. Of this additional US$ 250 million, perhaps 80 per cent (US$ 200 million) would be provided by donors whereas the remaining 20 per cent (US$ 100 million) would be allocated by governments and the local community, including the private sector. These rough cost estimates and suggested sources of financing are summarized in Table 9.

Table 9: PROJECTED COSTS OF SCHOOLING FOR ALL AND NON-FORMAL ALTERNATIVES FOR AFRICA
(Selected Countries, 1993-2003)

	Cost (Billions of US$)	Share (in percentages)
Schooling for All		
Government	2.25	30
Community and private sector	1.50	20
Donor aid	3.75	50
Subtotal	7.50	100
Non-formal Basic Education and Literacy Alternatives		
Government, Community and Private Sector	0.5	20
Donor aid	2.0	80
Subtotal	2.5	100
Total (over 10 years)	10.0	

Source: Dall F., ICAAC Salesbook, UNICEF, New York, 1992

IV. A LOOK AHEAD

Meeting the longer-term challenge to give every child the right to a basic education in a rapidly changing world is likely to require radically different thinking and solutions that are far more creative than those hitherto applied. Included in any new response to the education

rights issue are the questions now beginning to be raised in connection with the ongoing, unprecedented information and technological revolution: Who has the right to which kind of education? And for what purposes? It is increasingly evident that the challenge for the future is not just how to give children those basic reading, writing and numeracy skills that so many still lack, but also how to ensure that these basic learning skills are then converted into the technical skills needed to meet the challenges of the information and technological revolution that has already begun to have a major impact on most societies. Today's moral and ethical dilemma is, therefore, not only one of guaranteeing that every child be given literacy and other basic skills, a preparation that until now has been considered sufficient for access to the labour market; the dilemma is also whether we can and should give to all children — regardless of race, creed, gender and socio-economic background — an order or range of skills needed for survival in a highly dynamic post-industrial society.

Ensuring that every child has the right combination of basic skills for meeting his or her immediate survival needs is not only a challenge but also a moral obligation for all educators and governments genuinely concerned with providing an education that will also address issues of equity and social justice.[30] If we continue to do nothing to reduce the widening 'technical literacy' gap encouraged by the difference in quality and content of the education being received by the rich and the poor, we may be in danger of promoting an Orwellian world of two classes where a privileged and highly trained professional élite (concentrated heavily in the Northern and Eastern worlds) will be served by a mass of second-class workers (mainly from the 'South') permanently relegated to a life of limited opportunity for self-advancement. Will those who now belong to the so-called 'Third World' be finally reduced to being the serving class of the rich and technically sophisticated world of 'info-managers' in the 'North'? Can something be done to narrow the educational gap which is dangerously close to becoming, within a generation, unbridgeable? Or is it already too late to prevent the inevitable? If education is a human right, then access to a functional level of 'technical literacy' must also play a key role in defining what constitutes an adequate educational level in our rapidly changing job market.

Making relevant basic skills and technical knowledge available to both the North and the South at an affordable cost may be a far greater and more profoundly moral challenge than limiting our goal to meeting the 'literacy needs of all', albeit a challenge we failed to meet adequately during the preceding decade. Now more than ever, however, time is not on our side. The exponential nature of the information beast's growth suggests that any tooling

up to meet the new demand may need to be handled differently if we are to ensure that every child is accorded her or his right to an adequate preparation for entry into this new race for new skills to meet the demands of the new information society. Unfortunately, the only pertinent point of reference — namely the Jomtien Declaration and Framework for Action — focuses on the need to make education more relevant for meeting the basic learning needs of all children, but falls short of coming to grips with the issues of technical relevance and the contribution education should be making to the kind of world in which most of our children will be struggling to survive during the 21st century.

The right to a very different education, one which will give the learner the technical competencies needed for the new revolution, may well be as real an education priority as that accorded to literacy skills. Will planners and policy makers, for want of vision and strong leadership, relegate developing nations to the bottom of the class again? Will the majority of developing countries, barely now entering their first revolution (the agricultural one), and those only recently entering their second revolution (the industrial one), be irreparably left behind by those about to enter their third revolution (the information one)? Implicit in the answer to this question is the definition of 'basic learning needs', which, especially for individuals involved in educational change and policy reform, is based on important equity and child rights issues.

'Jomtien' raised the level of international debate by challenging us to re-examine all our preconceptions about what constitutes an appropriate basic education; how this should be implemented; by whom; and for whom. Models for the delivery of a traditional curriculum may now need to be carefully examined and, if found wanting, changed to ensure that today's children in every part of the world have access to an appropriate basic education, one which meets the technical challenges of our age and succeeds — where traditional approaches seem to have failed — in giving to the notion of 'education as a child right' the equity element that lies at the heart of the disparities separating the education systems of the rich and the poor. Can this be done quickly enough to provide the unreached with a basic education and to help those tooling up to join the age of information management do so in an appropriate way?

Three important developments may have begun to limit future options for bringing basic education services to all the world's children by the year 2000:

The first, just alluded to, relates to the demands of the new information age and to the need for redefining the concept of basic education, since what is required goes beyond

the conventional 'three R's' and includes basic technical skills such as computer literacy and a fundamental understanding of information theory.

The second development has to do with rapid population growth combined with diminishing resources and declining economic productivity — all factors that restrict the degree of freedom nations have for delivering the kinds of services needed to achieve the goal of universal basic "education for all" implicit in the CRC. Most affected are the nations of the developing world, especially in Africa and South Asia.

A third and largely unexpected development is the direct outcome of the 'new world order' and has to do with the recent radical shift in world power from a confrontational stalemate between two superpowers to the current atomization of nation-states. The rapid splintering of nations into smaller ethnic entities or enclaves will ultimately be counterproductive for the achievement of universal educational goals. Many of the emerging new micro-nations, unable to be self-supporting and in need of reconstruction, will now begin to put pressure on donors in order to survive. As a result, the donor nations' resources may become so stretched that little may be left for helping the world's poorest, most populous nations attain the universal access to basic educational goals spelt out in the Jomtien Framework for Action and the World Summit for Children Declaration. These recent trends may have set back the cause of child rights by several decades, especially in Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East where the rising waves of nationalism, ethnicity and religious fundamentalism have ignited civil strife and war.

The growing tendency towards social, economic and political turmoil challenges us more than ever before to find new ways to meet our future educational needs. In this changing situation, the nearly ubiquitous, standard Western European classroom model may be the single largest constraint to our meeting, with the requisite flexibility, the growing demand for affordable and effective basic education services. Mounting evidence suggests that formal, classroom-centred models have become the unaffordable, irrelevant and unmanageable 'albatrosses' of our learning system. Few developing countries have the resources — financial or human — to make 'Western' education work; and even growing numbers of industrialized countries undergoing unprecedented social, demographic and economic change are finding it increasingly difficult to provide equitable, high-quality "education for all" using a model designed to service the needs of an 18th-century, pre-industrial European society.

If, as surmised, a 'new education model' is needed to match the demands of a radically different society — and to respond to the growing public awareness that, in this age of unprecedented change, learning should provide skills that contribute to the survival of both the individual and the society — then we must start to think in new ways. Learning environments (not necessarily schools) where the learning process can thrive in a flexible, well-organized and productive way will share a common set of characteristics. The facilitators (not necessarily professional teachers) who will help make this new model work may also share a distinctive set of characteristics, which will closely reflect their new role as managers of learning and not purveyors of received knowledge and dysfunctional information.

What Should the Characteristics of This 'New Model' Be?

1. **For nations seeking to become better integrated into the 'information age'**, their educational systems may need to have many of the following characteristics:

- community- and home-based learning stations would be set up, closely linked to the work place electronically via a network of personal computers, radio and satellite networks. The process would be a continuous one, eliminating the largely artificial pre-, primary- and secondary-school level distinctions. Children would participate as soon as they were ready to benefit from structured learning. Readiness would be determined by each individual's characteristics and needs;
- members of each community and parents would be involved in the learning process through a system of special instruction credits which could be earned by individuals volunteering to become facilitators of learning, in lieu of their normal work;
- learning units would be modular to encourage individual access, flexibility in use and better assessment of performance. Each learner, with the help of a parent or community facilitator, would be able to choose a sequence of modules that could be completed in the learner's own time and at his or her own pace;
- the management and assessment of learning would become a community-based responsibility, supervised and assisted by a central agency or institution responsible for overseeing norms and standards;
- the cost of the process would be borne by each local community; financial backing or assistance would be provided to poorer communities through a central financing agency or special credit bank set up to promote community-based learning;

- the content of the learning modules would be the shared responsibility of the family, the community and the private sector; and local needs and regional differences would be reflected in the learning content of the courses so as to cater more fully for the special cultural and language needs of each community.

2. **For nations recently coming to grips with their own industrial revolutions,** an improved schooling model with the following characteristics would probably help them to meet their learning requirements:

- this model would be decentralized, and owned and managed by the community;
- teachers would be held accountable for pupil performance by a system of credits based on the community's assessment of teacher performance;
- schools would be closely linked to each community and the local work place and curriculum content jointly decided by parents, the community and the local work place;
- the health, nutritional and psychosocial needs of each child would be a common responsibility of the family, the community and the learning place;
- achievement would be assessed by individualized, competency-based examinations rather than by norm-based ones;
- children's learning experience would include selected attachments to the work place to enable them to make well-grounded career choices; and
- the contents of the curriculum would focus on the need to provide children with skills and knowledge for life as well as appropriate vocational skills.

3. **For nations entering their agricultural revolution,** many of the characteristics highlighted above will apply, but special attention should perhaps be given to the following:

- pre-school and primary school services should be integrated under one roof, with parental and community participation as an important part of the learning strategy;
- adult literacy and life skills, together with other relevant learning modules, would be developed to encourage illiterate parents to learn alongside of their children, thus making schooling a community activity for the benefit of all;
- the curriculum would reflect each community's needs and would be jointly developed by parents and teachers;

- schools would be flexibly run to accommodate the cyclical needs of poor rural communities whose subsistence depends on working the land;
- communities would own and run their schools with the help of government advisers; and funding for the schools' upkeep would come from a special line of credit created for this purpose through a 'learning credit bank'.

The ideas brought together above are not new. Thoughtful problem-solving educators, past and present, have no doubt shared similar thoughts on how best to address the problems of basic education; and some may even have tried them out. Their significance here is to help generate debate and encourage a more critical assessment of the challenges now presented by the CRC, the World Summit for Children and the Jomtien World Conference on Education for All.

V. CONCLUSION

Article 28 of the CRC — which culminates fifty years of advocating for international legislation on children's rights — unequivocally supports the notion that State Parties to the CRC must make "primary education compulsory and available free to all"; and provide equal access to secondary, vocational and higher education. However, the same instrument is far less clear regarding the extent to which signatories are committed to implementing these obligations. To help address this deficiency — but also in response to the growing awareness that international organizations, conventions and declarations had in the past done little to meet the demand for good-quality education for children (especially those living in the developing world) — governments, educators and administrators from 155 countries met in Jomtien in March 1990 to craft a joint "Framework for Action". Through a process of consensus, this unique document, for the first time, arrived at a statement that clearly spelt out how to implement the educational provisions of preceding international instruments and integrate these provisions with current thinking about basic education. The Framework for Action conceptually places learning acquisition before traditional forms of teaching. It also identifies a set of clearly articulated goals that challenge educators to find innovative and cost-effective ways of delivering basic education services to all groups of children, especially the poor, the handicapped and other children in need.

Nevertheless, if the Jomtien Declaration on Education For All and its accompanying instruments erred, it was on the side of caution. Insufficient attention was given to the changing social and economic context and its effects (both current and projected) on the form and content of education. The rapidity of world change is affecting all societies in an unprecedented way, but not all in the same way. While the least-developed countries are barely entering their agricultural revolutions, new nations in the Pacific are well into their industrial revolutions. For their part, Western nations — once the leaders of the industrial revolution — are now being challenged by new technologies to restructure their economies to meet the challenges of the information age. In the process, substantial and increasing numbers of low-income people are seeking to migrate from the developing to the industrialized and post-industrial world.

These widely differing patterns of social and economic transformation are challenging educators to think more profoundly about what children should learn and how and where they should be learning. The unique 19th-century classroom model has failed to keep up with the challenge; it is itself in need of radical change if the goal of providing every child with a good basic education is to be achieved in our lifetime. Part of the answer lies in the need to build partnerships and to pool resources and knowledge so as to maximize our efforts. The Jomtien Conference has challenged us all to work seriously together to develop joint plans of action in an analytical and diagnostic fashion. We have enough research results, empirical information and conceptual analyses to support such an approach in a number of regions, including Latin America, Asia and the Pacific. Similar attempts are already under way in Africa.

What is frequently missing, however, is the political will to set aside narrow group interests and reorganize priorities in favour of human needs — especially the needs of those least able to fend for themselves. For the cost of one nuclear submarine, Africa's current primary schooling could be revitalized and made more responsive to the growing demand in the majority of African countries for better-quality basic education. Well-conceived and well-designed innovative projects to reach the unreached (school drop-outs, housebound girls, nomad children, Gypsies and other minority groups who make up the largest proportion of the unschooled) would go a long way towards reducing the high numbers of children at both the primary and secondary levels who still do not have access to basic education — and probably never will, unless we begin to think differently about how to tackle the problem.

Examples pointing in the same direction as the BRAC schools in Bangladesh, *Escuelas Mayas* in Guatemala, and the *Tostan* method in Senegal (Boxes 2,3 and 4) already exist. What is important about each of these experiences is not the unique solution each community has been able to find to resolve its educational issues, but the problem-solving process in itself. BRAC and *Tostan*, after 13 and 15 years respectively, are now able to demonstrate positive — and apparently sustainable — results because the process that led to the outcome was developed, owned and implemented by the local community and not imposed by central governments or from abroad, as has so frequently been the case in the past.

The challenge will be how to make the educational provisions of the CRC responsive to the needs of the community. It may not be enough to mandate through one more international convention the right of the child to education, if the societies being challenged are themselves run by governments that are mostly unaccountable to the people or not made legally responsible to adhere to the international conventions they have ratified. A number of possible new approaches are suggested to meet the needs of the 21st century. Each will require, besides a comprehensive analysis of a country's educational needs, imagination, creativity and the courage to challenge existing Western-type classroom models with thinking that comes from within the community and is not, again, imposed from outside.

The latter observation applies, in particular, to developing countries, long held ransom by their colonial history to imported educational models which have proved to be as costly as they have been ineffective in meeting the sociocultural requirements of communities with diverse ethnic and linguistic needs. The challenge for all today is not why or how to do it, but whether we have the political will to divert resources to what should and can be done. The new democratic consciousness sweeping the world will be unsustainable unless we all make a firm commitment to advocate real structural change to help find and mobilize the ideas and the resources needed to make the educational provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child a reality and not just the ineffectual phrases of yet another well-meaning international convention. It is hoped that the Convention on the Rights of the Child — together with the Jomtien Framework for Action and the corresponding education goals of the World Summit for Children — represents a new opportunity to initiate a series of radical reforms to give a basic education to every child, irrespective of race, socio-economic status, gender or creed. To some, this goal may still seem too ambitious, but many others are recognizing it as a critical investment in human development and nation-building, as well as a key moral imperative of our times, essential for all our futures.

ENDNOTES

1 Alston P., unpublished draft entitled 'The Article 28 of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*', United Nations Children's Fund, New York, 1992.

2 Affirmative action programmes discriminate in favour of women and minority-group members, encouraging, through measures such as preferential access, quotas and financial incentives, increased representation of these categories, in recognition of past and present patterns of discrimination against such groups.

3 See note 1 *supra*.

4 Article 2.1: "States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status."
Article 2.2: "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members."

5 Article 29.1: " States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:
(a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
(b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;
(c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;
(d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;
(e) The development of respect for the natural environment."

6 World Conference on Education for All, *World Declaration on Education For All and Framework For Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs*, WCEFA, New York, 1990.

7 See also United Nations Children's Fund, *Children and Development in the 1990's: A UNICEF Sourcebook for the World Summit for Children*, New York: UNICEF, 1990; United Nations Children's Fund, *First Call For Children and Convention on the Rights of the Child*, New York: UNICEF, 1990.

8 Formal education is termed the 'first channel'; non-formal education, the 'second channel'; any other means of reaching people informally or formally, such as poetry, dance, discussion groups, meetings and mass media, the 'third channel'.

9 Carnoy M., *The Case For Investing in Basic Education*, UNICEF, New York, 1992.

10 Eisemon T., 'The Consequences of Schooling: A Review of Research on the Outcomes of Primary Schooling in Developing Countries', in *Education Development Discussion Paper No.* 3, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA., 1991.

11 See Psacharopoulous G., 'Returns to Education: A Further International Update and Implications', *Journal of Human Resources* 20, 1985; and United States Agency for International Development, *The Economic and Social Impacts of Girl's Primary Education in Developing Countries*, ABEL Research Study, Washington, D.C., 1990.

12 See Dall F.P., 'Education, Agricultural Extension and Peasant Farmer Marginalization', dissertation in partial fulfillment of the Doctoral Degree, 1987; and Feder G., et. al., 'The Impact of Agricultural Extension: A Case Study in Haryana, India', India, 1985.

13 Stobart, M., 'Prologue', in Tarrow, N.B., ed., *Comparative and International Education Series*, Volume 3, 'Human Rights and Education', Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1987.

14 Naik J.P., 'The Economic Social and Family Context on the Child's Right to Education', UNESCO, Paris, 1979.

15 Tronick, E., 'Policy Guidelines for the Implementation of Early Childhood Development Programmes'. Report presented at the meeting on 'Early Childhood and Preschool Education', organized by the Education Section, Programme Division, UNICEF, New York, 25 September 1992.

16 Reimers F., 'The Impact of Economic Stabilization and Adjustment on Education in Latin America', *Comparative Education Review*, 35 (2), May 1991.

17 UNICEF, *Educating Girls and Women: A Moral Imperative*, UNICEF, Education Section, Programme Division, New York, 1992.

18 Ibid.

19 See, for example, discussion of gender disparities in United States Agency for International Development, *Educating Girls: Strategies to Increase Access, Persistence, and Achievement*, ABEL Research Study, Washington, D.C., 1990; Dall, K.N., 'The African Girl Child: Challenges and Prospects in the 1990's', UNICEF, New York, 1991; Gajraj S. and Schoeman K., 'Primary Education: The Excluded', UNESCO, Paris, 1991; and *Challenges For Children and Women in the 1990's*, Kenya: UNICEF, Regional Eastern and Southern Africa Office, 1991.

20 See Jacobs, D., *UNICEF Education Report Activities*, UNICEF, New York 1993; Ahmed M. et al., *Primary Education for All: Learning From the BRAC Experience*, ABEL/AED Publication, Washington, D.C., 1993; UNICEF, *The Progress of Nations 1993*, UNICEF, New York, 1993; Lovell, C.H. and K. Fatema, *Assignment Children: The BRAC Non-Formal Primary Education Programme in Bangladesh*, UNICEF, New York, 1989.

21 Jacobs, D., note 20 *supra*.

22 The following discussion of indicators relating to the education of Gypsy children in European countries is taken from Costarelli, S. (Ed.), 'Children of Minorities: Gypsies', *Innocenti Insights*, UNICEF, International Child Development Centre, Florence, 1993.

23 Article 30: "In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language."

24 See note 22 *supra*.

25 Bonfiglioli, A. and Watson, C., 'Pastoralists At A Crossroads: Survival and Development Issues in African Pastoralism', UNICEF/UNESCO, NOPA Project, Kenya, November, 1992.

26 Ibid.

27 A discussion of the *Tostan* method can be found in Jacobs, D., note 20 *supra*.

28 Colclough C. and Lewin, K., *Educating All The Children: Strategies for Primary Schooling in the South*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1993.

29 Dall, F.P., 'Basic Education: An Investment in A Better African Future', paper prepared for the Organization of African Unity International Conference on Assistance to African Children, Dakar, Senegal, 25-27 November, 1992, in *Africa's Children, Africa's Future: Background Sectoral Papers*, OAU/UNICEF, New York, 1992.

30 Dall, F.P., 'Survival Skills and the Primary School Curriculum: What Should Children be Learning in School?', *Forum For Advancing Basic Education* 2 (2), 1993.

INNOCENTI OCCASIONAL PAPERS
CHILD RIGHTS SERIES

CRS 1 'Women's Rights and Children's Rights: The United Nations Conventions as Compatible and Complementary International Treaties'. Savitri Goonesekere. (September 1992).
Available in English.

CRS 2 'Implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: Resource Mobilization and the Obligations of the States Parties'. James R. Himes. (November 1992).
Available in English.

CRS 3 'Home-based Community Day Care and Children's Rights: The Colombian Case'. Carlos Castillo Cardona, Nelson Ortiz Pinilla, Alejandra Gonzalez Rossetti. (May 1993).
Available in English and Spanish.

CRS 4 'Education and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Challenge of Implementation'. Frank Dall. (November 1993).
Available in English.

ISSN 1014-7837

unicef

International Child Development Centre

Piazza S.S. Annunziata, 12
50122 Florence, Italy
Tel. 3955-234-5258 - Fax 3955-244817
Telex 572297 UNICEF I

ISSN 1014-7837